

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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USEC BRUSSELS 8730

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 30698

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, FR, UR

SUBJECT: FRANCE'S GOVERNMENT, ITS COMMUNISTS AND THE SOVIET UNION;
A TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIP

1. SUMMARY. THERE FOLLOWS THE INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF
PARIS A799, AN AIRGRAM DESCRIBING AND ANALYZING THE
TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY,
THE FRENCH GOVERNEMENT AND THE SOVIET UNION. END SUMMARY.

2. A TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIP EXISTS IN THE INTERACTION
AMONG THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY (PCF), THE FRENCH
GOVERNMENT (GOF) AND THE SOVIET UNION. THIS RELATIONSHIP
IS COMPLEX. NO TWO SIDES OF THE TRIANGLE ARE EQUAL. THE
DEGREE OF INTERACTION OF EACH ELEMENT WITH THE OTHER
TWO VARIES, AND EACH IS INFLUENCED BY A VARIETY OF
CIRCUMSTANCES OUTSIDE THE TRIANGLE. NEVERTHELESS, ALL
ARE TIED TOGETHER BY A WEB OF INTERLOCKING INTERESTS.

3. DURING THE GAULLIST YEARS, THIS TRIPARTITE RELATION-
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SHIP SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN GOVERNED BY TACIT AND HIGHLY

NEBULOUS UNDERSTANDINGS. WHEN DE GAULLE AND THE SOVIETS FOUND CLOSER RELATIONS TO BE IN THEIR MUTUAL INTEREST, ALBIET FOR DIFFERENT REASONS, THE FRENCH COMMUNISTS DAMPENED PUBLIC CRITICISM OF THE GOF AND EASED THE DISRUPTIVE ACTIVITIES OF THEIR TRADE-UNION ARM, THE CGT, AND THE PARTY MILITANTS. THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT FRINGE BENEFIT OF DETENTE FOR DE GAULLE, WHO WAS WARY OF THE PCF'S POTENTIAL FOR INTERNAL DISRUPTION.

4. UNDER PRESIDENT POMPIDOU, HOWEVER, FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS HAVE COOLED. THE FRENCH HAVE MOVED AWAY FROM THE MORE EXTREME "ANTI-AMERICAN" POSITIONS OF GENERAL DE GAULLE, EXPANDED THE COMMON MARKET, TALKED INCREASINGLY OF A EUROPEAN DEFENSE FORCE, COME OUT AGAINST MBFR AND HAVE IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH CHINA. ON THE OTHER HAND, MOSCOW'S STEADY ARMS BUILDUP, ITS PREFERENCE FOR DEALING WITH WASHINGTON ON GLOBAL ISSUES, AND THE SOVIET PERSECUTION OF INTELLECTUALS HAVE ALL CAUSED CONCERN IN PARIS. WHILE BOTH SIDES CONTINUE TO GIVE LIP SERVICE TO THE UTILITY OF FRENCH-SOVIET DETENTE, THEIR RELATIONSHIP INCREASINGLY IS BECOMING DISTINCTLY STRAINED.

5. PARALLEL WITH THIS PROCESS, PARTICULARLY DURING THE LAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS, THE PCF HAS STEPPED UP ITS CRITICISM OF THE POMPIDOU GOVERNMENT AND HAS EMBARKED ON A MORE DYNAMIC APPROACH TO POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES. THE FOCUS OF THIS AIRGRAM IS ON THESE RECENT EVENTS.

6. OUR GENERAL CONCLUSIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- A "TACIT UNDERSTANDING" GOVERNING THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE PCF, THE GOF AND THE USSR CONTINUES TO OPERATE, BUT IT IS BEING STRETCHED AT EACH POINT OF LINKAGE.
 - IN PURSUING THEIR AIM OF WINNING A ROLE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE, THE FRENCH COMMUNISTS ARE BECOMING MORE ACTIVE IN CHALLENGING POMPIDOU WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A NON-REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY.
 - BASICALLY, THE PCF REMAINS LOYAL TO MOSCOW AND RESPONSIVE TO GUIDANCE FROM THE KREMLIN ESPECIALLY
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ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS; HOWEVER, THE SOVIETS SEEM TO BE GIVING THE PCF MORE SCOPE, ESPECIALLY IN IMPLEMENTING ITS ALLIANCE WITH THE SOCIALIST PARTY.

- THERE IS A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STRAIN IN FRENCH - SOVIET RELATIONS AND PCF TACTICS DESIGNED TO OPPOSE THE POMPIDOU GOVERNMENT MORE EFFECTIVELY.
- THE PRESENT TREND IS TOWARD MORE TRADITIONAL "ADVERSARY" RELATIONS AMONG THE PCF, THE GOF AND

THE USSR, SUCH AS THOSE WHICH WERE CHARACTERISTIC
DURING THE FOURTH REPUBLIC.
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